

February 15, 2022

**Testimony on HB 538 –
Voters' Rights Protection Act of 2022
Ways and Means**

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 538, which would expand early voting in Maryland to include the Sunday before the election.

Democracy works best when all eligible persons are able to participate and make their voices heard. Early voting allows more opportunities to get to the polls – easing or eliminating problems for those who cannot make it to vote on Election Day.

Early voting has proven tremendously popular in Maryland. Given that early voting has proven to be a success, it can be assumed that adding an additional day will also be helpful for bringing voters to the polls. According to the 2020 report by the Maryland State Board of Elections, the percentage of voters taking advantage of early voting is steadily increasing. As the state strives to engage more voters in our elections, it is important to provide opportunities for voters to cast their ballots at a time and on a schedule that works with busy lives, long work hours, and other barriers to voting on Election Day.

Common Cause Maryland recognizes the concerns by the State Board of Elections that the current poll book technology would struggle to accommodate early voting too close to Election Day. We are open to support any amendments that SBE feels are needed to ensure that implementation will go smoothly.

We support expanding early voting to ensure that all voters have ample opportunity to get to the polls, and HB 538 is an important part of that reform.